

MORAL TALES,

IN

VERSE:

CALCULATED TO PLEASE AND INSTRUCT
YOUNG CHILDREN.

EMBELLISHED WITH
NUMEROUS ENGRAVINGS.



LONDON:

PRINTED BY AND FOR HODGSON & CO.

JUVENILE PRESS,

No. 10, NEWGATE-STREET.

SIXPENCE.

CHILDREN'S BOOK
COLLECTION

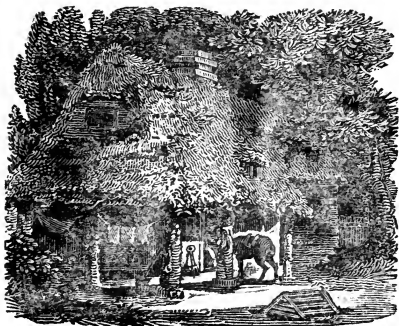


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BERNARD M. MEEKS



FRONTISPIECE.



Whether in prose or pleasing verse,
Tales of amusement you rehearse,
Still keep morality in view ;
For nought improves that is not true.

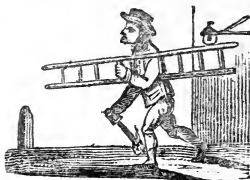
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A YOUNG MAN'S TRIBUTE OF GRATITUDE TO HIS PATRON.

I remember, dear patron, those sad gloomy days,
 When I wander'd forlorn and unknown,
 When rude was my speech, and unpolish'd my
 ways,
 None kindly corrected, nor cheer'd me with
 praise,
 But left me in darkness to moan.

Then your friendly hand was stretch'd out to
 my aid,
 My spirits to raise from the dust,
 On virtue and learning you bade me be staid,
 Nor of a vain world or myself be afraid,
 But seasons more cheering to trust.

On my heart deep engraven, till nature decay,
 Those marks of your tender esteem,
 Whatever betide me, shall ne'er wear away:
 I'll fondly recall them with each coming day,
 And gratitude still be my theme.



SIGHTS IN THE AIR.

How is it, that we are so mightily pleas'd
At seeing a thing in the air ?

If a straw, by a gust of the wind, is but seiz'd,
How eagerly people do stare !

And so, when a youth sees his paper-kite fly,
Till its beauties are lost in a cloud,
His delight is increas'd as it mounts tow'rds the
sky,

And he's cheer'd and carress'd by the crowd.

But when a Balloon, with a *man* at its tail,
Like a black little speck can be seen
By the aid of a glass, should the naked eye fail,
Curiosity then is extreme !

Yet the sun, moon, and stars, those great sources
of light,

Unheeded still roll on their way,
Dispersing the gloom of a long winter's night,
Or adding new charms to the day.

Just so 'tis with those, who lie grov'ling below,
Thinking but of themselves and their deeds ;
Whilst to God all their comforts and pleasures
they owe—

To God, who his children still feeds.



A PIOUS CHILD'S REFLECTIONS ON DEATH.

“ Why are those men in sable clad,

“ With muff'd hooded wands ?

“ Why stand they there, so grave and sad,

“ As waiting for commands ?”

So ask'd a little pious boy,

Passing a person's door,

Where death had damp'd the inmates' joy,

And pleasure reign'd no more.

“ Those men are mutes,” it was replied,

“ They keep the crowd away :

“ Within, some one has lately died,

“ And is interr'd to-day.”

“ Yes, said the child, we all must die,

“ And mingle with the clay ;

“ Yet not for ever there to lie,

“ But once more see the day.

“ It must be so—for GOD hath said
(I've read it in His Word)

“ That He will call the righteous dead

“ To Heav'n, as their reward !”



THE DRUM.

There's music in the drum—
 The music of the grave;
 It bids to death and slaughter come
 The generous and the brave.

It is oppression's voice—
 The language of the tomb;
 Whilst tyrants loud rejoice,
 It seals the victim's doom.

Its harsh, discordant sounds,
 Beating upon the ear,
 Speak but of blood and wounds,
 Of wretchedness and fear.

Always, dear Charles, beware
 Of those who boast of glory;
 And shun the dangerous snare
 That lurks in martial story.



STAGE-STRUCK.

" Stage-struck ! stage-struck ! What is that ?"
 Hear, and I will tell you what :—
 It is to run stark mad for plays ;
 To waste your nights and spend your days
 In studying how to make a face
 With true theatrical grimace ;
 'Tis how to manufacture groans,
 And sing in sickening semi-tones ;
 It is the mouth to screw and pinch,
 Whilst killing Shakespeare inch by inch ;
 It is to think yourself a king,
 A beggar, knave, or any thing ;
 It is to dress just like a fool,
 And run away from work or school ;
 To be the public's laughing-stock,
 And sometimes even virtue mock ;
 At all events, not to be nice
 In gilding o'er some pleasing vice.
 These, with some exceptions, rare,
 Are stage-struck features, I declare.



THE IMPRESSED SAILOR.

Poor Jack had just return'd from sea,
 Right glad his faithful wife to see ;
 And they were walking on the strand,
 Close arm in arm, and hand in hand,
 Whilst all the perils and the pains,
 With all his losses and his gains,
 Jack then recounted to his wife,
 And hop'd that all his future life
 To her might be entirely given,
 Until it pleas'd the God of Heaven
 To call him up aloft, when he
 Should bid farewell to earth and sea.
 "Talk not of that, my dearest Jack,
 "It glads my heart to see thee back :
 "Tear not the wound that yet is sore,
 "For thou shalt never leave me more."
 Thus Mary spoke, and heav'd a sigh,
 Whilst tears hung trembling in her eye ;
 But, ah ! not long they trembled there—
 The Press-gang over-heard her prayer :
 Unseen upon poor Jack they fell—
 The rest, dear child, I scarce can tell :
 Poor Mary sunk upon the shore—
 She sunk, alas ! to rise no more !



THE WATCHMAN.

Said Tom to his father, "Pray what is the reason

"That Watchmen should ramble all night?

"In all sorts of weather, in every season—

"To me it seems hardly quite right."

"They tell us the hour, child," his father replied,

"When you're fast asleep in your bed!"

"But when I'm asleep, Pa," Tom laughingly
cried,

"With the hour I don't trouble my head."

"Nay, do not you laugh, Tom," the father then
said,

"The Watchman's a very good friend:

"'Tis not the mere hour that he calls, but your
head

"From the thief in the night he'll defend."

"Since that is the case, Pa," said Tom, "I will
not

"A Watchman to ridicule turn;

"Whoever is useful, tho' humble his lot,

"Should never be treated with scorn."



MARY WALTER.

Playing with the dog all day,
 Little Mary Walter,
 Soil'd her frock, as I've heard say,
 Which before was smart and gay—
 Foolish Mary Walter!

Her mother came, and chided sore,
 Little Mary Walter;
 Oftimes she'd done the same before,
 Not once or twice, but many a score—
 Naughty Mary Walter!

“Can't I romp with pretty Tray?”
 Cri'd out Mary Walter;
 And laughing loud she ran away,
 But that was a fatal day
 For poor Mary Walter!

As Tray and her together ran—
 Thoughtless Mary Walter!
 They met a very naughty man,
 Travelling with a caravan,
 And in popp'd Mary Walter!



THE ARTILLERY-MAN.

This an Artillery-man they call :

“ What art does he profess ?”

“ The art of firing cannon-ball

“ With judgment and address.”

This question, with its short reply,

’Twixt Susan and her brother

Once pass’d ; yet thus they went not by,

But soon produc’d another.

’Twas this :—“ But tell me, brother, why

“ Cannon are fir’d at all ;

“ Is it to shake the earth and sky,

“ And throw away the ball ?”

“ O ! no, my dear,” the youth replied,

“ It is to kill our foe ;”

“ That’s stranger still,” poor Susan cried,

“ He’ll die himself, you know.”



THE FOOLISH GIRL.

A girl had a doll,
Which she call'd pretty Poll,
'Twas a gift from her worthy aunt Mary;
At first she caress'd it,
And nurs'd it, and dress'd it,
Until of her doll she grew weary.

First, she broke off its nose,
Next, its fingers and toes,
And scarcely did leave a limb whole:
Its clothes, torn and tatter'd,
She round the room scatter'd,
Then in its red cheek burnt a hole!

Now having destroy'd
This doll, once her pride,
She began to reflect on her folly:
Did sorely repent,
And to aunt Mary went,
And wanted to have a new dolly.

"Oh! no," said the aunt,
" ' Wilful waste, woful want: '
"I never will buy you another;
"I'll save all my pence
"For children of sense,
"And buy a new book for your brother."



EDWARD AND THE MATCH- WOMAN.

“ Come buy my fine matches—come, buy them,
my dears ;

“ Oh ! buy, and relieve a poor old woman’s fears !

“ My age, want and care,

“ My grief, and despair,

“ Are pushing me fast down the vale of my
years !”

’Twas a cold winter’s day, and fierce blew the
loud blast,

When a poor aged match-woman thro’ the streets
pass’d ;

And thus she did moan,

And fetch many a deep groan,

As if every one was ordain’d as her last.

Kind Edward, the boy of benevolent breast,
Whose delight was to comfort the poor and
oppress’d,

Saw this old woman’s grief,

And, soon yielding relief,

In making her happy, he felt himself blest.



A TALE OF A TUB.

A tub!—a mere tub!—well, and what of a tub?

Why, a tale of a tub I will tell ye,
About a poor fellow, who met a sad rub,
By making a god of his belly.

This man, you must know, was remarkably fond
Of ale that was brew'd in October;

And I think what he drank would have fill'd a
large pond,

For 'twas seldom he went to bed sober.

One night, being thirsty, as usual he went
To draw a large draught from the barrel;
But being much flutter'd, he left out the vent,
For he and his wife had a quarrel.

So the air it got in, and his ale it went flat,
And he could not discover the reason;
He storm'd and he swore—kick'd the dog and
the cat,

That his ale should go bad at that season.

At length he resolv'd in the barrel to peep,
Which no man would do that is sober;

When, not being able his balance to keep,
He was near being drown'd in *October!*



THE FIGHT AT "THE DOE."

" Pray where are you going?

" Do, mind what you're doing,

" Or else you'll be lost in the snow ;

" Come take my advice,

" And turn back in a trice ;

" You're a fool one yard farther to go.

" Here's a warm public house,

" Where, as snug as a mouse,

" You may sit, and hear all the fine news ;

" Besides, there's a fight

" To take place here to-night,

" 'Twixt a couple of capital Jews !"

So spoke a vile sot,

To old honest John Scott,

As he pass'd by the sign of the Doe ;

But he turn'd a deaf ear,

And refus'd to draw near,

For he was " not afraid of the snow."

So he went on his way ;

But I shudder to say

What became of the men at the Doe :

When the battle was o'er,

They were turn'd out of door,

And many died drunk in the snow !



THE HAPPY TINKER.

There was an honest Tinker,
 Whose heart was full of glee;
 He was no jovial drinker,
 Tho' merry man was he;

And he was married to a wife,
 And they had children three;
 They liv'd in peace, and knew no strife—
 Ask you how this could be?

Come here, my little pretty boy,
 And sit upon my knee,
 And what produc'd this Tinker's joy
 I will relate to thee:

'T was simply this :—He feared the Lord,
 And from all vice did flee;
 Do but the same, then, take my word,
 You'll be as blythe as he.



THE EFFECTS OF RELIGION.

That man is improv'd, there can be little doubt,
 In virtue, in science, and art;
 Since, time was when few from their homes
 durst go out,

Assassins and thieves always lurking about,
 To rob, and then pierce thro' the heart.

The castle, which built by the sea-side you see,
 Was one of a thousand besides ;

Its owner was noble, was gen'rous and free,
 A stranger to vice and oppression was he—
 And constant to truth as the tides.

Upon the Welsh border this castle long stood,
 And fierce the attacks it sustain'd
 From a neighbouring baron—a foe to all good—
 Whose delight was in rapine, in murder, and
 blood—

Yet still its position maintain'd.

At length true Religion did smile on our land,
 The bright sun of righteousness rose ;
 And Learning and Reason, with Truth, hand in
 hand,

O'er all such barbarities took the command,
 And those became friends who were foes !



THE IMPARTIALITY OF BRUTE ANIMALS.

“ A horse ! a horse ! ” King Richard cried,
 “ My kingdom for a horse ! ”
 Death, or a prison to avoid,
 He bawl'd till he was hoarse.

Could not a king to such distress
 Always remain a stranger ?
 O ! no : for monarchs are not less
 Than others free from danger.

The horse on which the poor man rides,
 Not easier goes, or faster,
 When 'cross his back a sov'reign strides,
 And is his lord and master.

Honour from men to kings belongs,
 But brutes no difference know ;
 Birds chaunt alike their merry songs
 To please the high and low.



THE LIGHT-HOUSE.

A light-house, built amidst the waves,
That dash against its base,
Whilst millions find their wat'ry graves,
Will still maintain its place.

And how can it withstand the shock,
Or such a combat wage ?
'Tis built upon the solid rock,
And braves the tempest's rage.

Were its foundations insecure,
'Twould scarcely stand a day ;
And thus, dear child, you may be sure
The vicious will decay.

But those who trust in virtue's power,
And make the Lord their guide,
Will stand against Affliction's power,
And every foe deride.



THE SOLDIER'S MONUMENT.

“ Pray what is that house, without window or door,

“ Surrounded with cypress and yew ?”

Ask'd Mary, who often had seen it before,
But its object she never yet knew.

“ 'Tis only a fanciful building of stone,”

Said her brother, who stood near at hand ;

“ But why 'twas built here, and left standing alone,

“ I confess, I can't well understand.”

Their father came by, as wondering they stood,
And thus did the matter explain :

“ 'Tis a monument rais'd to a soldier right good,
“ Who in a great battle was slain.”

“ But then did they kill him, to bury him here ?

“ What harm, father, pray had he done ?”

“ Ah ! that I can't tell you ; but this I know, dear,

“ That the battle he fought in was won !”



THE PRIEST, AND THE PASTOR.

Oh! the ills of superstition!
 Oh! the mischief which it brings!
 Oft to what a mean condition
 It has brought the mightiest kings!

When the mind from true religion
 Once departs, no one can tell,
 In what dark and cheerless region
 It henceforth may choose to dwell.

Priests, whom Heaven ordains to lead us,
 Should be careful how they act;
 With the bread of Heav'n should feed us—
 Not with whims, remov'd from fact.

Reverence, child, the holy pastor—
 Keep his counsels, and be wise;
 CHRIST, the Saviour, is his master—
 CHRIST, who reigns beyond the skies.



TOM AND THE BULL-DOG.

A large Bull-dog Tom's father had,
 For which Tom show'd affection;
 But we shall see how far it went,
 Upon a close inspection.

This dog would fetch and carry things,
 And do as was commanded;
 But if it fail'd in any point,
 'Twas sorely reprimanded.

Tom was a boy of some good parts,
 But shockingly capricious;
 And I have often found that such,
 Are apt to be malicious.

One day he rode on *Blossom's* back,
 Until the dog was tired,
 And made its sides with beating crack:—
 And now its anger fired.

It turn'd its head, look'd up at Tom,
 As gently to reproach him,
 Which vex'd Tom so, he never more
 Would let the dog approach him!



THE SOLDIER'S LIFE IN TENT AND FIELD.

A canvas house, with wooden top,
 Far off from any church or shop;
 A room, where two can scarcely pass,
 A carpet made of weeds and grass,
 A bed expos'd to midnight air,
 Of sheets and blankets rather bare,
 A smoking fire of new cut wood,
 A table made of turf or mud,
 A cloth with human blood besmear'd,
 A foe hard by, who never fear'd,
 A wife, forsaken and alone,
 Hearing her husband's dying groan;
 An orphan child, for victuals crying,
 Crawling amongst the dead and dying—
 Its infant moaning and imploring
 Drown'd amidst the cannon's roaring;
 These are the comforts war doth yield,
 Or in the tent, or in the field;
 Then if you relish things like these,
 Go for a soldier, if you please,



THE STORM AT NIGHT.

“ Oh ! what a dark and dismal night !
 “ How fierce the tempest howls !
 “ Not one small ray of glimmering light !
 “ And how the thunder rolls !

“ I would not for the world be out
 “ On such a night as this ;
 “ ’Twould shake a heart than mine more stout ;
 “ And then—one’s way to miss !”

Thus Edward spoke—then faster clung
 Unto his father dear ;
 Till on his neck he trembling hung,
 Ready to die with fear.

Fear not, dear child—God made the night,
 “ In him put all thy trust ;
 “ He will preserve, in dark or light,
 “ The pious and the just !”



THE AFFECTIONATE ORPHANS.

O ! 'tis a pleasing sight to see
 Children in mutual love agree,
 Of the same parents born ;
 Alike their hopes, alike their fears—
 From the same cause their smiles and tears
 Come with the night, or vanish with the morn.

Two little children once there were,
 Subjects of many a fervent prayer,
 But they were orphans left ;
 A raging fever, in a day,
 Both their fond parents snatch'd away,
 And thus were they of their kind care bereft !

Now had these little children been,
 Like some young children I have seen,
 Not to each other kind,
 How dreadful then had been their case,
 Both toss'd about from place to place,
 Like a dismasted ship before the wind !



IGNORANCE OF OUR FATE A BLESSING.

“ Sleep on, sweet babe, thy soft repose
 “ Nor guilt nor shame destroys ;
 “ A stranger yet to mental woes,
 “ And to delusive joys.

“ Weep not, as if thou could'st foresee
 “ The pain and toil of life ;
 “ Sufficient will be left for thee
 “ Of this world's care and strife.”

So sung a tender nurse, and kind,
 Over her sleeping care :
 Tho' young, she had prepar'd her mind
 To guard against life's snare.

'Tis well for us the Book of Fate
 Is hidden from our eye :
 Could children see their future state,
 They oft would wish to die.



THE USELESS FINGER-POST.

" Ah ! there's a finger-post quite near,
 " Will point me out the way ;
 " Come, take fresh courage, don't despair,
 " I shant be lost to-day !"

So said an aged traveller,
 Crossing a desert track,
 And, having wander'd very far,
 Was ready to turn back.

But when at this same finger-post
 The poor old man arriv'd,
 Old Time had every letter cross'd—
 Not one faint word surviv'd.

Just so it is with those who teach
 What none can understand ;
 Or offer what no one can reach,
 By his own feeble hand.



THE GAME COCK AND THE LOOKING-GLASS.

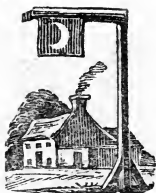
I'll tell you a tale of a Cock,
That once very quarrelsome grew ;
And tho' it your feelings may shock,
Indeed, my dear child, it is true.

In all the farm-yard there was none
So bent upon fighting as this ;
On strangers he would set upon,
And to beat them, but seldom did miss.

But sometimes a thrashing he got,
And his feathers all ruffl'd and spoil'd ;
Yet he seem'd not to mind it a jot,
But still remain'd savage and wild.

Thro' a dressing-room window he flew,
On the table a looking-glass stood,
In which there appear'd to his view
A Cock of the true fighting blood.

Full of wrath, he soon gave a fierce peck ;
A second and third too, he tried—
Broke the glass, and got fast by the neck,
Where he fought with himself till he died !



THE TAVERN,

NOT USED, BUT ABUSED.

Public taverns first were made
 For man's accommodation ;
 Now they are dens, where snares are laid
 To catch his reputation.

This house, which stands the road hard by,
 Seems snug, and much inviting ;
 Within are sounds of mirth and joy,
 Whilst many a conscience smiting.

The tavern drains the tradesman's purse,
 Produces pain and ruin ;
 'Tis of domestic peace the curse—
 Of thousands the undoing.

Dear child, when you to manhood grow,
 Avoid these haunts of danger :
 Live, that your friends may hear and know
 To taverns you're a stranger.



THE GRUMBLING PAVIOUR.

" 'Tis hard thus to work,
 " Like a negro or Turk,
 " And then such small wages receive :
 " Here am I, all the day,
 " With scarce half an hour's play—
 " It will kill me, I really believe."

Thus a paviour complain'd,
 As his living he gain'd,
 When a good little boy pass'd that way ;
 Who, pitying his case,
 Look'd him full in the face,
 Saying, " Pray, work no longer to-day."

" Work no longer!—my lad,
 " Do you think I am mad,
 " To live, and have nothing to carve?
 " I complain'd, it is true ;
 " But, between me and you,
 " It is better to work than to starve."



KILLING TIME AND BREAKING THE SABBATH.

A Dandy and a Dandyzette
I met one Sunday walking :
And tho' 'twere rude to listen, yet
I over-heard their talking ;

And all their chattering was about
Plays, pastimes, games, and scandal ;
Of this grand ball, and that great rout,
Of Crib, and Gas, and Randall.

'Tis true, the man he seem'd polite,
And bow'd to every body ;
The lady too, tho' not so quite,
Appear'd a simple noddie.

Now, as I saw them stroll away,
Scarce knowing where they wander'd,
It griev'd my heart that such a day
Should be so idly squander'd.



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